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non-Aryan groups was taking place in Indian society and Hinduism was consolidating itself. The highly organized craftsmen's guilds of those days may perhaps have succeeded in maintaining their integrity and exclusiveness for a long time, but had ultimately to yield; yet the tension created by their resistance remained, and even when they were absorbed into the fold of Hindu society they were not admitted as equals to the groups of comparable social status and in consequence probably continued to maintain their age-long exclusiveness.

All the castes whose relative positions in the caste-hierarchy have been shown in the accompanying table are endogamous. There is a permanent social distance between them; the individual is born into a caste, and a subsequent change in status is, except to the very lowest strata of society, equally impossible upwards or downwards.[1] In general it may be said that people accept food at the hands of all castes occupying a higher level in this hierarchy, the only exception being that of the Vaddar, who do not accept food from the highly placed Sakali and Mar.gali. Without exception people on a higher level refuse food from those on a lower level. Each caste has a traditional occupation sanctioned by religion, and these monopolies should not be infringed upon, except in the case of agriculture, which all may pursue.

Mention should here be made of the Jangam and the Katike castes, of each of which there is one family in Shamirpet. The Jangam are a semi-priestly caste ritually attached to the Baljas, for whom they tie the 'lingam'—a phallic symbol representing Shiva—and function as priests on the occasion of weddings. On the days of *Pitra Moksha Amavasya*[2] and *Shivaratri*,[3] they visit Hindu houses, particularly of those peasants who follow the Shaivite[4]

[1] When a person is excommunicated or out-casted he is not down-graded and pushed into a lower caste; he is merely denied the privileges of equal participation in the socio-religious life of the community.

[2] The night of the New Moon in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada (August–September).

[3] The day on which Shiva is believed to have drunk the world's poison, retaining it in his throat, and thereby saving mankind from possible harm from this poison.

[4] Of the great gods of the Hindu 'trinity' Brahma is not worshipped because of his sinful infatuation for his own daughter, whilst Vishnu and Shiva are worshipped. Those who principally worship the former, usually in his incarnations as Rama and Krishna, are known as Vaishnava; those worshipping the latter as Shaiva or Shaivite. Cf. Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London, 1950), pp. 56–59, 296–300, 360–362.

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The Muslim section of the population belongs to the Sunni sect and follows the religious pattern laid down in the Koran as interpreted by the founders of this sect. A devout Muslim is expected to offer prayers five times a day. In Shamirpet this would be the exception rather than the general rule. Some of the Muslim elders offer prayers twice a day, some only once and the rest are contented with their weekly prayers on Friday. The Mulla, the Muslim priest in the village, is the only person who offers the prescribed prayers every day. Fasting during the month of Ramzan is undertaken by a very large number of Muslims, but those maintaining it without a break until the end of the month would not total even a quarter of that number. The Muslims have a high degree of community-consciousness, but in Shamirpet it does not find expression in the form of intense religious devotion among the adherents of the Islamic faith.

With the exception of the Brahmin and the Komti castes, the Hindus have no fixed time for daily worship. The number of people who visit a temple or shrine every day is negligible. But festivals and ceremonies are observed with unfailing regularity. Otherwise the gods are remembered only at times of disease or difficulty. As a rule, only some of the elderly people devote themselves to 'the daily duty of remembering the creator'; the younger people 'have much else to do'. They participate in ceremonies, partake of the festival feasts, and assemble to listen to the reading of the holy books and to the recitation of mythological legends by professionals when they happen to visit the village. The tasks of remembrance and repentance are postponed for old age. Among both men and women, only the elders seem to talk about 'the change of times' and 'the decline in the religious attitudes and ethical standards of the people'. In the everyday thought and speech of the younger generation there is very little of religion; and little conscious effort at seeking any deep religious experience or thrill is to be found among them. In the life of the community under observation, we noticed only two exceptions to this. One of these is the *Urs*, a semi-religious fair, commemorating Jalal Miyan, a local Muslim divine with some reputation for being a holy man. This fair is sponsored by the Muslims but is largely attended by the Hindus also. The second is the annual worship of a village goddess organized by the village. On both these occasions several people are temporarily possessed by the spirit

of Jalal Miyan or by one of the goddesses. Going into a trance these people speak for the spirit which possesses them. The other people who are present there make offerings to them, seek solutions of their pressing problems and difficulties, and request them to remedy their ills and worries. Considerable enthusiasm is in evidence among them at this time. With these exceptions there is very little religious thought, talk or worship in normal life.

However, both Hindus and Muslims have a degree of fatalism and demonstrate a spirit of resignation towards predestined facts ordained for them by the supernatural forces of the world beyond. People can often be heard to remark, 'If it is written in our fate, we must submit to it. Human effort cannot alter the will of God. What is predestined must have its course.' But this fatalism makes its appearance only when the people have tried their best to solve the problem and having spared no effort still find themselves no nearer a solution. Coupled with this concept of fate is the Hindu doctrine of *karma*. According to this concept, which takes for granted the phenomenon of the transmigration of the soul and its re-birth, our actions in the past life determine the character of our present life, and our actions in this life will determine the character of our future life. The village people clearly reconcile and synthesize these two views into a practical precept: the course of our present life is largely predestined on the basis of our acts in the past life, but by acting 'rightly' in this life we can materially influence the course of our life after death.

The rural ethic lays great emphasis on 'acting rightly', that is on the observance of traditional norms; because it is the only way to achieve happiness and prosperity in this life, and more than that to ensure the destiny of the soul after death. The problem of the future plays a very significant part in the ordering of life. Both Hindus and Muslims believe that death is not the end; there is something beyond it. Both attach great importance to the destiny of the soul after death. While the Muslim expects to remain in his grave until the Resurrection, when on the Day of Judgement he will be assigned to heaven (*jannat*) or hell (*jahannum*) according to his deeds, for the Hindu life is practically an unending process. After death one either goes to heaven (*swarga*) or to hell (*narka*), or one takes re-birth. Depending on one's actions in the past life, one may be born into one of the castes higher or lower than one's caste in the previous life, or even into some other lower species

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who have images of deities bathe them every day and make offerings of food. They are often described as 'family' or household gods. The pictures are worshipped on the occasions of festivals. In the neighbouring village of Aliyabad there is a temple of Rama. Besides these, there are several shrines of the village goddesses. Eight of these are important. Two shrines are dedicated to Maisamma—the *Gadi Maisamma* protects the house and dependants of the village headman, and the *Katta Maisamma* lodged near the tank protects the village boundaries and presides over the agricultural prosperity of the community. Pochamma too has two shrines—one near the houses of the Vaddars and another between the living quarters of the Madigas and the Erkalas. The shrine of Dugamma near the village post office is also important. There is one shrine each for Mahakalamma, Mutyalamma, and Pinamma.

People eagerly take the opportunities of attending religious fairs, and of going to holy places for a dip in one of the sacred rivers. The major centre of pilgrimage in the Telugu-speaking parts of Hyderabad is Bhadrachalam where there is an old and impressive temple by the side of Godavari. Those who can afford to and have the inclination go to the other places of pilgrimage having country-wide recognition, such as Allahabad (Prayag) and Benares (Kashi).

3. THE RELIGIOUS YEAR

Three major types of religious ceremonies and festivals are observed in the community; family ceremonies, village ceremonies, and caste ceremonies. The Muslim section of the village population has its own family festivals and some communal ceremonies. As pointed out earlier, they participate with their Hindu neighbours in the observance of common village ritual.

HINDU FESTIVALS

Feasts and fasts form an important part of Hindu religious life. Festivals are spread evenly over the whole year. Apart from village ceremonies, agricultural ritual, and special worships organized by some castes individually, there are several festivals which may be observed by most Hindu families, irrespective of their caste

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and social status. Important among these are: *Ugadi* (Telugu New Year's Day), *Rama Navami* (birthday of Rama; also regarded as his wedding anniversary), *Toli Ekadashi* (fast in honour of Vishnu), *Nagula Panchami* (worship of the cobra), *Rakhi Purnima* (day for the renewal of the sacred thread), *Krishna Ashtmi* (birthday of Krishna), *Chauti* (birthday of Ganesha, son of Shiva), *Petramasa* (day for offering water to the spirits of the ancestors), *Dasara* (celebration commemorating Arjuna's victory, with the help of Krishna, over the Kauravas), *Deepavali* (celebration commemorating the defeat of the demon king Narkasura at the hands of Krishna), *Til Sankranti* (day of the winter solstice marking the change of season, when days start gradually getting longer), *Shivaratri* (fast in honour of Shiva), and *Holi* (bonfires to commemorate the burning of Kamadeva, the god of love). In addition to these there are some festivals which are observed only by the higher castes, more particularly by the Brahmins, Komtis and Reddis. Important among these are: *Neela Gauri* (worship of Gauri, wife of Shiva, observed by Brahmins only), *Narsimha Jayanti* (day of Vishnu's incarnation as Narsimha—part human and part lion god, observed by Brahmins only), *Shravana Somwar* (Mondays in the Hindu month of Shravana, when Brahmins and Komtis observe a fast), *Ananta Chaturdashi* (the day when Vishnu incarnated himself as Ananta; observed only by Brahmins), *Kartika Purnima* (day for the worship of Gauri, observed only by Brahmin, Komti and Reddi women), *Vasant Panchami* (worship of household gods by Brahmins only), and *Rath Saptami* (worship of the Sun by Brahmins only). Two important agricultural rites observed by the families of cultivators are the First Sowing and the New Eating (Kottalu); each observed twice every year to inaugurate sowing operations and commencing the eating of grain from the freshly harvested crops. Ceremonies organized by the village as a whole are: the *Pochamma* festival (in honour of the goddess of smallpox), the *Batkamma* festival (in honour of Gauri; observed by village women) and the *Maisamma* festival (in honour of the goddess protecting the village boundaries). The different caste groups residing within the village have several caste festivals and ceremonies. For example, on the Dasara day the occupational castes worship their implements; the Gollas—caste of shepherds—have the festivals of Saudamma, Mallamma and Maude-Pochamma, all connected with their traditional occupation, and the untouchable Madigas have cults and related

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796 folk-plays concerning Jamavanta, their legendary hero and founder of the caste.

I do not propose to give minute ethnographic details regarding the festivals enumerated above. The brief accounts that follow are intended to illustrate the nature of the festivals and their place in the annual round of activities in the community. The mythological background of these festivals has been recorded from oral [805] tradition and not from Hindu scriptures. Hindu months, according to the Western calendar, would be:

Hindu Month	*Corresponding English Months*	*Hindu Month*	*Corresponding English Months*
Chaitra	March–April	Ashvina	September–October
Vaishakha	April–May	Kartika	October–November
Jyeshta	May–June	Margashirsha	November–December
Ashadha	June–July	Pushya (Pousha)	December–January
Shravana	July–August	Magha	January–February
Bhadrapada	August–September	Phalguna	February–March

The festivals are described in their chronological order:

Ugadi. Ugadi, the Telugu New Year's Day, is an important festival. It is observed on the first day of the Hindu month of Chaitra. Although it is observed by all the Hindu castes generally, its significance for the Brahmins, Komtis, Reddis and the Panch Bramha group is greater.

The day previous to Ugadi the Panch Bramha groups worship their implements and renew their sacred threads, which they alone wear, apart from Brahmins and Komtis.

On the Ugadi day itself people get up early in the morning. Women sweep the courtyard, sprinkle cow-dung mixed in water, and then draw decorative designs with flour or coloured powders. Men go out to collect mango leaves and *neem* (margosa tree, *Azadirachta indica*) twigs; make festoons (*toran*) by stitching these together in a long string, and decorate the front portions of their houses with them. The potters supply each household with two earthen pots: one large, another small enough to act as a lid for the larger. Each family expects these pots from the potter attached to it. All members of the family, except the sick, take their bath on this day, and gather together inside the house. In the room where the gods of the household are lodged the earthen pots are placed [272] in a central position. The large pot is filled with a sweet drink made by mixing jaggery, tamarind pulp, slices of raw mangoes, grated coconut and other spices. It is topped by the smaller pot.

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An earthen lamp is lighted and kept near the pot. Vermilion and turmeric paste are applied to the pots. The assembled members of the household then bow down before the images of the gods and pray to them for the prosperity and well-being of the family. If the family does not possess any images, the ceremony is generally performed in the main room of the house and people bow down in front of the pots 'with the thought of the gods in their minds'. A special kind of bread, with a sweet stuffing inside, is made in all well-to-do homes. Among the poorer occupational castes and the untouchables this is not done. Instead they visit the houses to which they are attached and are given a portion of the sweet bread and the drink.

The Brahmin family observes the festival in a more elaborate way. The images are bathed and dressed. Along with these the holy books in the possession of the family are also worshipped.

In the evening people gather together in front of the Deshmukh's house. All the responsible village elders are expected to be present on the occasion. Also the families of other major agriculturists are represented by one or more persons. The Brahmin consults his almanac and makes predictions for the year. Should they expect bumper crops this year? Or do the stars indicate scarcity and famine? Will the year be good for the health of the residents and their cattle? Or is there any apprehension of epidemics? What will be the general price-level in the market? Is there any fear of accidents—of snake-bite, drowning, lightning, etc? These and allied questions are covered by the priest in his forecast. Other questions of popular interest are referred to the Brahmin who tries to answer them on the basis of his astrological calculations. People soon break up into small groups, talk in a reminiscent mood about the years that have gone by, and comment upon the shape of things to come as indicated in the Brahmin's predictions.

Rama Navami. This festival is celebrated on the ninth day of the Hindu month of Chaitra. It is observed only by the Brahmins and Komtis, and by a few other enthusiasts belonging to some of the upper castes. Adults keep a 'fast' on this day; but this fast does not necessitate total abstention from all food. Fruit, milk-preparations, sago and cooked tubers can be eaten after the midday worship of Rama. In a fast like this it is necessary to abstain from cereals, lentils, everyday vegetables and common salt. In general

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796 only the adults are expected to observe this fast; but the novelty of the food which is given to all those who are fasting induces many children also to undertake it. At midday an image or picture of Rama, standing in a clean, central part of the main room is worshipped for a short while; offerings of the special food cooked for the day are placed before it, and all members of the family bow down to it asking for forgiveness and blessings. Most people break their fast in the evening to partake of a special meal comprising rich dishes and delicacies.

Neela Gauri. The observance of this festival is confined only to Brahmin women. On the third day of the Hindu month of Vaishakha, a large earthenware pan is filled with several kinds of soil—such as black earth, red earth, earth from an ant-hill and manure, and nine different grains are sown into it. The sprouts are supposed to represent Gauri, wife of Shiva, and are watered and worshipped daily for a month. Offerings of jaggery and gram soaked in water are made every day.

Narsimha Jayanti. This festival is observed in honour of Narsimha —an incarnation of Vishnu in a half-lion, half-human form—on the fourteenth day of the Hindu month of Vaishakha. In Shamirpet it is observed only by the Brahmin family. Some members of the family observe a fast on this day. At midday an image or picture of Narsimha is worshipped and offerings of jaggery and gram sprouts are made to it.

Toli Ekadashi. Brahmins, Komtis and some Reddis observe this fast on the eleventh day of Ashadha in honour of Vishnu. In the Brahmin family all adults are expected to observe this fast; among others only a few responsible people keep it. Although foods permissible in fasts can be eaten on this day, some people make it a total fast and do not take any food or water until the evening. Images of Vishnu and his incarnations are worshipped at home and at the village shrines; and offerings of coconut, dates and a preparation of gram and jaggery are made.

Nagula Panchami. On the fifth day in the month of Shravana, this festival is observed by the Brahmins, Komtis, Reddis and some other higher castes. On this day *all* Hindus are expected to observe the taboo which forbids the use of an iron girdle (*tawa*) for making bread. Even those who do not observe the festival itself refrain from using one on this day. In the families observing this festival, generally one adult member of the household fasts until the com-

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pletion of the worship of the cobra which takes place some time in the afternoon. Coconut, puffed rice, milk and a preparation of gram and jaggery are all arranged on a plate, and taken to an ant-hill by the person observing the fast. The ant-hill is supposed to be the abode of the cobra. There he lights a lamp and makes an offering of small quantities of the food brought on the plate. While returning home he keeps on dropping a grain or two of puffed rice all the way. A special sweet dish of rice and milk is prepared for the principal meal on this day.

Rakhi Purnima. Observed on the full-moon day in the month of Shravana, this festival has special significance for the Brahmin, the Sale and the Gaondla. All castes wearing the sacred thread change their old threads and wear new ones on this day. Some of the occupational castes, especially the Sale and the Gaondla, tie multicoloured threads to their professional implements. Normal economic and occupational activities are stopped on this day, and a feast comprising some sweet and rich dishes is a special feature of it.

Shravana Somwar. A half-day fast is observed on Mondays in the month of Shravana by the Brahmins and the Komtis. Those who are especially keen may observe a similar half-day fast on Saturdays also. The evening meal on such days almost always includes a sweet dish.

Krishna Ashtami. Observed on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Shravana, this festival resembles in all essentials that of Rama Navami described earlier. The principal worship takes place at midnight, the hour when Krishna—an incarnation of Vishnu—is believed to have been born. A sweet preparation consisting of jaggery, spices, and herbs—similar to one given to women after childbirth—is distributed at this time among those who attend the midnight worship. On the following day a fast is observed, and is followed by a feast in the evening.

Chauti. Chauti, observed on the fourth day in the month of Bhardrapada, is an important festival. This ceremony is observed in honour of Ganesha, the son of Shiva. On this and the three days that follow there is considerable festivity in the village.

With the exception of the untouchable Malas and Madigas and the semi-tribal Erkalas, in all other Hindu castes this day is celebrated with considerable enthusiasm. Those who can afford to, buy images of Ganesha from the shops in the city; those who

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796 cannot, make clay images at home. These idols are placed prominently in the front or central part of the house. The Brahmins and Komtis first clean the place where the idol is to be lodged, besmear it with cow-dung, then spread some soft sand over it. On this sand they place some leaf-plates, spread rice on them and cover the rice with a new cloth. The idol is placed on this cloth. Among the other castes the idol is placed either on a bunch of mango leaves kept on the floor, or else on a wooden seat. A sacred thread is put on the image, and finally it is marked with vermilion and turmeric. With this it comes to possess life as the deity starts residing within it.

A little lamp is lighted and kept burning in front of the image. At the time of the principal worship which differs in various families, flowers of several varieties are placed on and around the image, vermilion and rice (the latter made yellow with turmeric) are sprinkled on it, and *laddus* (little sweet balls of gram fried in syrup) specially made for the day are offered to the deity. When this is done all members of the household bow down before the idol. Many people express their wishes, which they then expect will be fulfilled with the blessings of Ganesha.

The image is allowed to remain in its place for three to twenty-one days, and is worshipped every day. When it is removed from its place, it is taken to the village tank and immersed in water.

Two special features of this festival deserve to be noted. First, some of the occupational castes worship their tools and implements. For example, the washerman applies vermilion and turmeric pastes to the large earthen pot in which he boils the clothes, and also to the stone on which he beats them clean. The barber does the same to his razors and scissors. The weaver worships the
[821] paraphernalia of his caste occupation. Secondly, it is believed that seeing the moon on the Chauti day is inauspicious, for anyone who does so may be falsely implicated in theft. But if anyone does see the moon, it is not difficult for him to undo its harmful effects. If he is abused by someone, the ill effect of his having seen the moon can be cleared. Thus in order to be abused by others people seeing the moon on this day indulge in practical jokes and cause offence to them in various ways. In return they are favoured with the abuse which expiates their sin.

Ananta Chaturdashi. Ananta Chaturdashi is observed on the fourteenth day of Bhadrapada by Brahmins only. On this day Vishnu

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is worshipped. Incense is burnt by putting *ghee* (clarified butter) on a fire in front of Vishnu's image. Two red threads are tied by the Brahmin, first to the arms of the image, and a little later, after being removed therefrom, to his own arm. 776

Petramasa. The last day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada is dedicated to ceremonies in honour of the ancestors and the deceased members of the household. In fact the whole fortnight preceding this day is occupied by this activity, for water must be offered to the dead on the *tithi* (the lunar day corresponding to that of their death). Among the higher castes, if the family can afford it, the Brahmin is invited to officiate at these rites. Those who cannot afford it, and people of the lower castes, manage it themselves. On the Petramasa day itself cooked rice, curds and several other preparations are offered to the deceased members of the lineage. Gifts of money, grain and vegetables are made to the Brahmin and the Jangam. 761 793

If there was a death in the family in the preceding year, during the Petramasa fortnight on the lunar day of death, an elaborate rite is performed to call home the spirit of the deceased and lodge it with other ancestor-spirits in one corner of the house. For these rites different branches of a family gather together under one main roof.

The Malas and Madigas as well as Vaddars and Erkalas do not have an elaborate observance. However, the first two make small gifts of money to the Jangam in honour of their dead, if the Jangam visits their houses.

Dasara. This festival is observed in the village both individually and collectively. All Hindus bath early in the morning. The Brahmin and the Komti worship a bunch of *shami* (*Prosopis spicigera*) leaves along with the images of gods; others worship only the deities. Observed on the tenth day of Ashvina, Dasara is regarded as a non-vegetarian festival. With the exception of Brahmins and Komtis, who are vegetarians, the other non-vegetarian castes make it a point to cook some meat dish on this day. At midday people worship the gods in their houses. 796

In the afternoon the Brahmin visits the Deshmukh's house, and worships a bunch of *shami* leaves and the headman's ancestral weapons. In the meantime a flag is hoisted on the central flag post near the police station. Madigas beat their drums and people start collecting. When all the responsible village elders assemble

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796 there the procession starts in the direction of the Hanuman shrine outside the village. The Madiga drum-beaters are at the head of the procession. At some distance from them are the Deshmukh, the Brahmin and the other elders. These are followed by the other villagers. At the shrine the Brahmin worships the *shami* leaves 796 and the goddess Durga. When the worship is over people snatch 554 the leaves. Then follows the important social act of exchange of 578 these leaves and a friendly embrace. Between castes of equal social status and between persons of equal kinship and age status within the caste itself, the exchange is on a basis of equality. For example, A will take a few leaves from B; and B will take a few from A. The two will then lock each other in an embrace for a few seconds. On the other hand, people of high caste will give some leaves to those of the low and untouchable castes; and the latter will respond by bowing down to touch the feet of the former. In the case of the untouchables this is a symbolic gesture, for they touch the earth near the feet of their superiors and not the feet. Within the caste itself the nature of this exchange is determined by the age and kinship status of the persons concerned. As a general rule elders and persons with a recognized superior status give some leaves to the juniors; and the latter, in their turn, bend down to touch the feet of their elders. On this day people are expected to forget their quarrels of the last year, and to meet each other in a spirit of friendship. In fact, many petty differences are forgotten, and several people who were hitherto not on speaking terms resume normal friendly relations again.

796 *Deepavali.* Deepavali or the 'festival of lights' is one of the most important Hindu festivals and is observed throughout Hindu India. The celebrations extend to two days—the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the dark fortnight of the month of Ashvina. On the first of these two days, known as *Narka Chaturdashi* or *Bhogi*, Hindus get up very early and have their bath. Women in the higher castes, especially among Brahmins, Komtis and Reddis, take lighted lamps on a plate and, waving them before their husbands, perform the *arati* rite otherwise reserved for gods. This has to be completed before the break of dawn. Later in the day images of gods and deities in the house are worshipped and specially cooked dishes are offered to them. In the evening a large number of little earthen lamps are lighted and arranged in front of the house; in other parts of the house, too, one or more of these lamps

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are kept. Some people worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, on this night; others do so on the second day. The Komtis, who are a trading caste, regard this worship as the most important in their religious year. 796

The second day is the day of Deepavali itself. Hindus wash their cows and bullocks, and put multi-coloured decorative marks on their bodies. Tinkling bells and other decorations are tied round their necks. A gruel is made and served to the cattle on this day. In the evening rows of lighted earthenware lamps are arranged in front of each house; some also being put in other parts of the house. In some families Lakshmi is worshipped on this day.

On both these days delicacies and rich sweet dishes are prepared. There is no fasting, for Deepavali is regarded as a festival for feasting.

Kartika Purnima. This is observed on the full-moon day in the month of Kartika, mostly by the Brahmin, the Komti and some women of other higher castes. Women keeping the fast take their bath early in the morning, apply turmeric paste to their bodies and wear yellow clothes. Later in the day they worship the sacred Tulsi plant (basil) and offer it twenty-one threads, twenty-one flowers (each of a different kind, if possible) and twenty-one garlands. In well-to-do homes the Brahmin priest is invited to officiate at this worship.

Til Sankranti. Sankranti (winter solstice) inaugurates the gradual lengthening of days, and is celebrated by all sections of the Hindu population of the village. While Brahmins, Komtis and Reddis observe it as a *lomulu* (*vrata*) or an occasion for special worship, in the other castes it is just an occasion for feasting.

In the higher-caste families observing special worship on this day, the women take their bath early in the morning. They apply turmeric paste to their bodies. For the worship itself two things have to be done. On a spot swept, cleaned and smeared with cow-dung, five new earthen pots are put. These contain sweet balls of *til* (sesame), pieces of sugar cane, country plums and other available fruit. Nearby, four lumps of cow-dung are placed, forming the corners of a rectangle which are then joined by new thread. Inside the rectangle a fire is lighted, and on it some milk is set to boil. This milk is allowed to overflow, and the direction of overflow is carefully noted. If it flows in a northern or eastern direction it is regarded as auspicious. Later some quantity of rice is

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796 cooked in this milk, and a sweetening—sugar or jaggery—is added to it. Small portions of this preparation are offered to the five earthen pots, and to the household gods and ancestor spirits.

In families which do not have this elaborate worship, women cook rice in milk, which is later offered to the household gods. Sweet balls of *til* are made and distributed by all families of means. Meat-eating sections of the population consider it essential to have a rich meat dish on this day. In fact some lower castes, such as the Vaddar, the Erkala, the Mala and the Madiga, do no more than have a meat preparation for their principal meal.

Vasant Panchami and *Rath Saptami*. Observed on the fifth and seventh days respectively in the month of Magha, these festivals have a special significance only to the Brahmins. On *Vasant Panchami* day the images are carefully cleaned and dressed in new clothes. The main worship on this day is that of Shiva. On the *Rath Saptami* day, on the other hand, the Sun is the principal god to be worshipped. In addition to the Sun, Vishnu and the Tulsi plant are also venerated.

Shivaratri. With the exception of a few Reddis, all Hindus in Shamirpet observe this festival in honour of Shiva on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight of Magha. A day prior to the festival the Hindus clean their houses. On the Shivaratri day itself they get up early in the morning. Men take their bath, women sweep the courtyard, sprinkle on it water mixed with cow-dung and make decorative designs with flour or coloured powders. After finishing this they too have their bath. Clothes and household linen are also washed. Those who can afford to, put on new clothes on this day.

This is an important fast. Those who observe it are not supposed to eat or drink anything until the worship, which takes place late in the afternoon at about 4 p.m., is over. For this worship most of the clean castes go to the village shrine where there is a Shiva *lingam*. Each family is represented by one or two responsible adults; women go only when there is no male member in the house. They take with them, on a plate, a coconut, a cucumber, boiled sweet potatoes and a preparation of gram and jaggery. These are offered to Shiva at the shrine. After bending down in front of the symbol of Shiva the people return home with their plates and the food offerings. Now they can eat, but their food must not contain everyday preparations of cereals and curries. Mostly they eat boiled sweet potatoes and cucumber. Some of the lower castes,

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especially the barber, the washermen, the Vaddar and the Erkala, do not go to this Shiva shrine; but instead they go to a deserted shrine outside the village. Although this shrine has no *lingam*, they make their offerings here. On the other hand, untouchable Malas and Madigas do not go to any shrine, and make their offerings of food in the name of Shiva in some corner of their houses. 796

Most people consider it desirable to keep awake for the whole night following. None should go to bed until midnight at least. For this reason a programme of dramatic performances, or of singing devotional songs, is invariably arranged by a group of village youths.

Holi. Holi is the last major Hindu festival of the year. It is observed on the full-moon day in the month of Phalguna. Five days before the festival there is a sudden burst of activity among the village youths and boys, who start collecting wood and piling it up in a central place in the village. Stealing of fuel—especially wood and cow-dung cakes—is socially approved; and the young people show considerable ingenuity in this respect. By the Holi day they arrange a sufficiently large pile of this fuel, to be able to light a really big bonfire. As the prestige of the village youth depends on the size of the bonfire, they work hard to make it impressive.

In the evening at about 7 p.m. the Madigas beat their drums and go round the village collecting more fuel from the residents. It is all systematically arranged and the pile is made ready for burning at the auspicious moment, previously fixed. The carpenter makes a crude wooden image of Kamadeva (the god of love) and places it on the pyre. Between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. the Madigas start beating their drums near the pyre. Women begin to come to the spot, bringing in their hands plates with burning earthen lamps and several preparations of food. On this day the Brahmin officiates for his own caste as well as for the Komtis; and the Kummari (potter) officiates for the rest of the community. In fact, the Kummari dominates the scene. When the Kummari women have brought their food offerings and placed them near the pyre, the headman of the potter's caste worships Kamadeva and offers small portions from these plates. The Brahmin does the same on behalf of the two twice-born castes of the Brahmins and the Komtis. The Kummari goes round taking little bits from the plates of all

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796 the others and offers them to the god of love. Imitating the ritual of cremation, then, the Kummari goes round the pyre thrice sprinkling water, sets fire to it and breaks the earthen pot. Men make a funny imitation of the sounds made at the time of the funeral and the crowd bursts into loud laughter. People wait for an hour or so and go home with some ashes from the pyre. They must be careful, for the young men of the village are still active, and such objects as wooden bedsteads, fences, doors and logs of wood are eagerly sought by them and thrown into the burning pyre.

Next morning Madiga drum-beaters and village watchmen go from house to house and beg for money. People start playing *holi*. Until mid-day they throw dust, mud, cow-dung and earth at one [602] another. Those standing in joking relationships with each other often engage in vigorous jest and banter. The singing of vulgar songs by men is permitted. At midday people bath and take their meal. Later in the afternoon they play *holi* again; but this time they only throw coloured powders and coloured water at each other.

New Eating. Twice every year, after each harvest, the 'New Eating' ceremony is arranged to initiate the eating of grain from the recently harvested crop. No particular day is fixed for it, and each family arranges it according to its own convenience. New paddy from the recently harvested crop is mixed with some old paddy, and is pounded and husked. If a family has no new paddy —and many non-agriculturists and agricultural labourers often do not—they borrow it from a neighbour. After being husked the rice is cooked and sweetened with jaggery. This is then offered to the gods and ancestor-spirits in the house, and later eaten by the members of the family. Prior to this ceremony, the eating of any grain from the new crop is forbidden by custom.

Muslim Festivals. Before coming to the common village festivals, it is necessary to describe briefly the festivals of the Muslims. With regard to religion and ritual the Muslim element in the village population has a separate identity of its own.

The Muslims observe seven important festivals. They are *Moharram*, *Meelad Sharif*, *Giarwin Sharif*, *Shabe Miraj*, *Shabe Barat*, *Ramzan* and *Id-uz-zuha*. These festivals follow the Muslim calendar, and unlike the Hindu festivals, which always occur in the same season, their time varies from year to year.

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Moharram. On the tenth day in the month of Moharram, Imam Hussain, the grandson of Mohammed, was put to death in the plains of Karbala after being denied food and water for three days. Moharram is observed in honour of this martyr and his associates. On the Moharram day symbols of Imam Hussain and his family, known as *alums*, are taken out by the Muslims in a procession to a nearby river or tank. All along the route they beat their breasts and cry aloud 'O, son of Ali' or 'Hussain, Hussain' and wail over the martyr's death. *Tajia* or large paper models of his tomb are also taken out and immersed in water. In all Muslim households a sweet drink either of water and sugar, or of milk and sugar, is prepared and distributed among friends and relations. The giving of alms and charity on this day is believed to contribute greatly towards ensuring one's future.

Meelad Sharif. Unlike Moharram, which calls for mourning, Meelad Sharif is an occasion for rejoicing, as the Prophet Mohammed was born on the twelfth day of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal. On the eleventh and twelfth days of this month people observe a fast. Muslim priests visit their homes, and passages from the Koran are read. Flowers and sweets are distributed in the name of Mohammed. The celebrations are continued for a month; although the festivities are at their peak on the two days mentioned above.

Giarwin Sharif. This is an important festival for the Sunni sect of the Muslims. It is observed in honour of Abdul Kader Geelani who belonged to Mohammed's generation, and was regarded as a very pious and holy figure. On the eleventh day of the month of Rabi-us-sani, the Muslims of Shamirpet fly the flag of Abdul Kader on their houses, and offer sweets, flowers and prayers in the name of their hero.

Shabe Miraj. On the twenty-sixth day of Rajjub, accompanied by an angel, Mohammed is believed to have visited the seven heavens and hell. Later it is said that he had an audience with Allah himself. To celebrate this event, this day is expected to be spent in meditation and prayer. If possible people keep awake for the whole night saying prayers and asking for Allah's blessings.

Shabe Barat. On the night of the fourteenth day of Shaban, Muslims offer sweets and bread in the name of their deceased kin. They visit their graves and offer flowers and prayers. It is believed

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769 that on this day the spirits of the dead come out to see their relations and to receive presents from them. Later all Muslims—men and women (if they are not in their menstrual period)—say their prayers and ask for God's blessing for their long life. Also they read the Koran. This night is important in that it is now that Allah determines the course of the lives of his followers for the coming year.

● 796 *Ramzan.* Ramzan is the most important month in the religious year of the Muslims. As far as possible, people try to fast for the whole month. They can have food before dawn and after dusk, but in between even a drop of water is not permitted. During these days one should devote as much time as possible to meditation and prayer. The twenty-sixth day of the month is specially important because it was on this day that 'Mohammed received the Koran from Allah'. People wear new clothes on this day, read the Koran and say their prayers. There is considerable enthusiasm in evidence as all Muslims—men, women and children—say their prayers and seek God's blessings. The month-long fasting ends on the day they see the new moon. The next day is spent in festivity and is known as 'Id-ul-fitr'. People breakfast early and wear their best—possibly new—clothes. The men go to the mosque for their Id prayers. After the prayers they go round to their friends' houses meeting and greeting them. On this day and on the two days following a sweet preparation consisting of vermicelli, milk and dates is made, and portions of it are sent to friends and relations. It is desirable that those who can afford it should distribute 2½ seers of grain per head to the poor and the needy.

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Id-uz-zuha. This festival is celebrated on the tenth day of the month of Zilhij. People get up early in the morning and without breakfast go to the mosque for their prayers. When they return home they sacrifice goats in the name of God. The general rule is that one goat is sacrificed in the name of each member of the family; but if this is not possible financially, a goat each may be sacrificed for each adult member of the household. Of course, even this is too much for many of the poorer Muslims, who sacrifice just one goat on behalf of the whole family. The meat of the sacrificed animals is cooked and people have their breakfast. Then they go round to meet and greet their friends. Delicacies and meat dishes are prepared in fairly large quantities and distributed among friends and relations.

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RITUAL STRUCTURE

Village Festivals

In the foregoing pages we have briefly described the major family festivals of the Hindus and Muslims. Some of the Hindu festivals, particularly Dasara and Holi, are partly communal also, as at one stage the entire Hindu section of the village community participate in them. In the Dasara procession several Muslims also join in. Hindus do not spare their Muslim friends from the Holi colour-throwing. Similarly, Hindus co-operate in the Moharram procession of the Muslims. On the Id day Muslims meet all their friends—Muslim and Hindu alike. But there are some festivals which must be described as 'village festivals' as they do not occur in the regular religious calendar of the Hindus and Muslims; and are generally celebrated by the village community as a whole. The festivals of Pochamma, Batkamma and Maisamma are important celebrations in this category. Pochamma and Maisamma festivals are observed by the village as a whole. Batkamma festival is observed by the Hindu women of the village. The untouchable Mala and Madiga women who cannot join the groups of clean-caste women observe it separately. To these must be added the fair of Jalal Miyan which is sponsored by the Muslims but is largely attended by the Hindus also.

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Pochamma Festival. The annual worship of Pochamma, the goddess of smallpox, is organized by the village community on a Thursday or Saturday in the month of Shravana. The actual day for the ceremony is fixed by the village elders in consultation with the Deshmukh and the Brahmin priest.

A day previous to the celebration the Madiga drum-beaters go round the village announcing the programme for the morrow and asking the people to get ready. The Kummaris clean the shrines of Pochamma, Mutyalamma and Mahakalamma. The Sakalis (washermen) whitewash them. Village youth construct small leaf sheds in front of the shrines. Wives of the Talaris (village menials) sweep and besmear with red earth the ground around these booths.

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Early next day people start making preparations for the worship. It is necessary that every family prepares its *bonam* for the day. For this they cook rice in a new earthenware pot obtained from the potter; remove all soot from the exterior of the pot, apply vermilion and turmeric paste to it on all sides, and then close its mouth. This decorated pot containing rice is known as *bonam.*

796 Most people prepare it in their homes; but some prefer to do so near the shrine itself.

Early in the afternoon the Madigas go to their own Pochamma shrine, which is near to but quite separate from that of the other shrine belonging to the rest of the community, and offer their *bonams* to the goddess. They worship her, and sacrifice goats, sheep and fowls. Some are possessed by the goddess at this time. But they have to hurry ~~back~~ as their presence is required for the procession of the other castes. In the meantime the Kummari (potter) who officiates as the village priest for this ceremony goes round the village collecting from every house oil for burning lamps near the shrine, and rice for preparing the *bonam* on behalf of the whole village. The rice thus collected is cooked by the Kummari women in a huge pot near the shrine.

An hour before the scheduled time for worship, the Madigas start beating their drums at a central place in the village. People start collecting there with their *bonams*. Some carry these on their heads; others take them to the shrine in bullock carts. The Madiga drum-beaters walk at the head of the procession, followed at some distance by the Deshmukh and other respectable people and village elders, and then by the common people of the village. By the time they reach the shrine some people are possessed by the goddess. At the shrine, the Kummari first offers rice from the common village *bonam* to the goddess. After doing this he withdraws himself from the scene for a short while to enable the Brahmin and the Komti to make offerings from their *bonams*. Then the Kummari firmly establishes himself as the priest, and offers rice from the *bonams* of all other castes. In this, precedence is given to superior castes in a very rigid way. One after another, castes lower to each other in the traditional hierarchy are called upon to come forward to make their offerings. Within a caste itself, people occupying a superior status in respect of their position in the village organization, age and wealth are given precedence over the less favourably placed members of their group. This often creates difficulties, and is instrumental in causing tensions and enmities between different castes or between different families of the same caste. Alongside the offerings of rice; goats, sheep and fowls are sacrificed on behalf of the different families. The Golla shepherds present a specified number of goats and sheep every year to the community which are now sacrificed on

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behalf of the entire village. The head and the forelimbs of the sacrificed animal are left in front of the shrine; the rest of it, along with the *bonam*, is carried home by each family, and when all the sacrifices are over the people return home and feast on the rice and meat. 796

Muslims also participate in this festival. They do not believe in any Hindu gods, but are as afraid of the village gods and goddesses as the Hindus. However, they do not participate in the worship; sacrifices on their behalf are made by the barber or the washerman.

Batkamma Festival. The first nine days of the month of Ashvina are observed as days of festivity with singing and dancing and the worship of Gauri by the Hindu women of the village. Women from the two highest castes, i.e. Brahmin and Komti, do not participate in the dancing, although on the last day they too go out for the final worship with the rest of the village women. Similarly, women from 'respectable' families refuse to join in the dance; and, being untouchables, Mala and Madiga women cannot join the clean-caste women in their dance. Thus the two highest and the two lowest castes keep away from the major part of these celebrations, and so also do the women from urbanized and respectable families. The mythological background of the festival is not clearly understood by anyone: all they know is that during this period Gauri, the wife of Shiva, was piqued by her husband, and that it is to please her that they dance. 796 562

For the first seven days women mostly dance in small groups in their respective living-quarters and lanes. On the last two days women from different quarters of the village form small parties of twelve to thirty and dance in front of all the important houses; for this they get small presents of grain or money. In the evening at about 4 p.m. they arrange various kinds of flowers into beautiful designs on their plates and proceed in a procession towards the tank. At this time Brahmin and Komti women also join them. Near the tank these plates containing flowers are placed on the ground in the centre and the women dance around them. In this dance the Brahmin and Komti women do not participate. When the dance is over the flowers are immersed in water. Then a small portion of a sweet dish prepared with gram and jaggery is also put in the water and the women return home. This is done 796

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196 on the eighth and ninth days, which are the last days of the festival.

Maisamma Festival. Maisamma protects the village boundaries and ensures the fertility of the fields. An elaborate ceremony is performed in her honour whenever the crops are very good and demand an expression of special gratitude. This festival is not an annual feature in the life of the community and is celebrated only every three or five years.

The days for the celebration are fixed by the village elders after mutual consultation and agreement. The details are often finalized by the village council, which also decides the basis on which subscriptions will be raised from the different families in the village. When there are only a few days left for the festival, preparations for it are taken in hand under the supervision of some enthusiastic youths. For this festival several castes living in the village have to make their special contributions. For example, the Kummaris contribute the earthen pots and officiate as the priest; the Sakalis (washermen) whitewash the Maisamma shrine; the Mangalis (barbers), along with the Sakalis, sacrifice the goats, sheep and fowls; the Wadlas (carpenters) contribute the flag-posts; the Kammaris (blacksmiths) provide the iron fitting to these posts; the Sale (weavers) give cloth for the flags; the Darzi tailors the flag; the Gaondlas (toddy-tappers) provide the fermented palm-juice required for the worship; the Gollas (shepherds) have to contribute the goats and sheep for sacrifice on behalf of the entire village; and finally the Madigas play their [262] musical instruments. The agriculturists provide the funds. Brahmins and Komtis, being vegetarians and averse to animal sacrifice, pay their share of the subscription, but otherwise keep away from the festival. The Muslims contribute towards its expenses and are present at the time of worship.

The festival lasts three days. On the first day an earthen pot is filled with fermented palm juice, marked with vermilion and turmeric, and carried in a procession to the Maisamma shrine to the accompaniment of Madiga drums and pipes. The Kummari officiating as the priest offers it to the goddess and distributes it later among the people present there. On the second day families of agriculturists, as well as some others, cook rice near the shrine and offer it to Maisamma. The third day is reserved for the final worship and for the making of sacrifices. People go in a procession

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to the shrine led by Madiga drum beaters. The Kummari burns incense, and sacrifices on behalf of the village the goats and sheep contributed by the Gollas. The animals are killed by the Sakali and the Mangali, but their heads and forelimbs are offered to the goddess by the Kummari. This is followed by sacrifices on behalf of families who, in fulfilment of a promise or in anticipation of a favour from the goddess, have brought a goat, sheep or fowl to be sacrificed. At this time some people become possessed by the goddess and go into a trance. Late in the evening the people return home and have a feast of rice, meat and other delicacies.

Urs of Jalal Miyan. Village Muslims have a tradition for holding semi-religious fairs in honour of holy persons who have had some association with their locality and who have given proof of their supernatural powers by doing some minor miracles. Every winter the Muslims of Shamirpet arrange a fair near the tomb of Jalal Miyan, a local Muslim divine. On the day of the fair a green cloth is spread on the tomb and green flags are hoisted near it. Shopkeepers from Shamirpet and nearby villages set up their shops on the open ground nearby. When people assemble there in the afternoon, incense is burnt near the tomb and flowers and food are offered to Jalal Miyan. The Mulla reads from the Muslim scriptures. If possible Muslim singers are invited from the city to sing religious songs. On this day also some persons are possessed. People having difficulties or some pressing problems seek remedies and solutions from those who are possessed by the spirit of Jalal Miyan. The fair sometimes includes a programme of country sports, acrobatic feats, singing by young men of the village, and even dramatic performances. Although it is primarily a Muslim fair, Hindus attend it in large numbers.

Analysis of this summary survey of the religious year in the community reveals that the Hindus and the Muslims have two practically independent ritual systems, which have very few points of contact. Muslims participate in the common village ritual, but they do not actually perform any worship. However, most of them share with the Hindus the general belief-pattern associated with these cults. On a social basis, the Muslims join in the Dasara procession of the Hindus; the latter join in the Muslims' Moharram procession. The two groups participate almost equally in Jalal Miyan's fair; but the Hindus do so not for a religious motive, but

796 563 for the sake of the fun that they expect to find in the fair. A closer examination of the Hindu festivals and ceremonies reveals that a large number of all-India Hindu festivals are observed in the community; but a good many of these are restricted to the 'twice 796 born' castes of the Brahmin and the Komti. Some of them are 564 observed by a few other higher castes, or often only by a few 'respectable' families in these castes. Ceremonies and worship connected with these festivals are conducted by the Brahmin in castes occupying a level higher than that of the Sakali and the Mangali (excluding the Panch Bramha group). The Sakali and the Mangali invite the Brahmin if they can afford it, or else they manage with a caste priest. While the Brahmin and the Komti, of all the castes, are most interested in a majority of the festivals of this category, in the common village ritual they are passive and distant observers. In the two major festivals of the village, which involve considerable inter-caste co-operation, it is the Kummari[1] who officiates as the priest and not the Brahmin. The bulk of Hindus celebrate relatively few of the all-India festivals with great enthusiasm, but it could be said that groups occupying higher rungs in the ladder of caste hierarchy are found to observe more of these festivals. In fact the higher the status of a caste the greater is the number of these that it observes; and thus we find the Komtis observing more of these festivals than any other Hindu caste, with the sole exception of the Brahmin who, being of a superior caste, observes a few festivals more than the Komti. The local village cults are still living and vital. In them the participation of the two highest castes is nominal; but that of the other castes complete. The Kapu group of agricultural castes occupying an intermediate position in the caste hierarchy participate in both sets of rituals with equal enthusiasm.

4. RITUAL OF THE LIFE CYCLE

184 561 The basic pattern of ceremonies connected with the major crises of life is the same in all sections of the Hindus in the village community; but in the minor details of the ritual there is considerable difference in the practices of different castes. More than this, even within a particular caste the rites and observances are not identical, for in some respects individual families have their own traditions. In the course of our field-work we found the catalogu-

1 [i.e., member of potter caste.--ANALYST]

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reason they happen to be interested. In former times, as a general rule, the decisions of the village council were accepted unconditionally. Even to-day none can defy them openly, but often the cases are taken to superior law courts and factionalism within the council is exploited to get its decisions altered or modified.

In the traditional economic structure of the community the following characteristics were important:

(i) Occupation was determined by the caste of the individual.

(ii) Mobility was limited and people had great attachment to the settlement.

(iii) Different castes were integrated into the overall pattern of village economy on the basis of their functional specialization. For their co-operative labour payment was made in kind at the time of harvesting.

(iv) There was barter of occupational services between the various artisan and occupational castes.

It has already been pointed out that in the last few decades the occupational character of caste has undergone some modifications. In place of their traditional occupations people have started accepting other vocations. The traditional system of caste interdependence under which artisan and occupational castes attach themselves to the families of agriculturists is still there. But the attached labourers of untouchable castes are showing signs of discontent and figures for the last ten years show twenty-one migrations of Madiga families to the city. Barbers, washermen and carpenters also openly express preference for a basis of cash payment as that enables them to negotiate and bargain and puts an end to the uncertainty and occasional high-handedness of the employer under the old system. The traditional arrangements involving the barter of occupational services between artisan castes too is now gradually breaking down and is giving place to a basis of cash payment.

In the ritual structure of the community no significant variations have been found. Under the Muslim régime, Hindus co-operated in the public ceremonies of the Muslims. With the spread of the revivalist and reformist ideas of the Arya Samaj greater interest was taken in the Hinduism of the holy books. Preachers invited from the city added to the folklore of the people some fragments of traditional Hindu mythology. However, the regional cults as well as the village cults still continue to retain their former position.

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755 776 782 private sacrifices are taken away by the offerers, and that of the public victim belongs to the headman of the village. The rice, fruit, etc., are distributed among the various officials. The function lasts from about ten a.m. to five p.m.

In the evening, a cart is brought to the image with nine pointed stakes standing upright in it, two at each of the four corners and one in the centre: on each stake a young pig, a lamb, or a fowl is impaled alive. A Mālā, called a *Pambala*, *i.e.* hereditary priest, then sits in the cart dressed in female attire, holding in his hand the clay image of the goddess which was made for the festival. The cart is dragged with ropes to the extreme boundary of the village lands, and both cart and ropes are left beyond the boundary. The Pambalas take away the animals, which all die during the procession, as their share of the offerings.

• 796 776 782 785 *Living animals impaled in many villages.* This cruel ceremony of impaling live animals is quite common in the eastern part of the Telugu country,[1] and I have come across it in many villages that I have visited. The Rev. F. N. Alexander, the veteran C.M.S. missionary, who lived over fifty years at Ellore, told me that he witnessed it in the town of Ellore the first year that he went there, and wrote a letter to the *Madras Mail* describing it. As a result of his letter, the practice was forbidden by the Government. So now at Ellore the animals are tied on to the stakes without being impaled; but in many villages near Ellore the custom still survives of impaling the unfortunate animals alive. Sometimes there are only four stakes on the cart, sometimes five, and sometimes more. It is not often that there are as many as nine. In one of the villages of the Kurnool district, I found that a similar barbarity was practised in connexion with the hook-swinging ceremony. On the fifth day of the festival in honour of Aṅkalamma, a large car is constructed, with an arrangement of poles projecting

[1] Cf. pp. 59, 65, 69.

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about 20 feet in the air. A sheep is then suspended from the pole by iron hooks fastened through the muscles of its back and a band round its middle, and swung round and round. Two or three of the older men in the village said that they had often seen men swing like this with iron hooks fastened into their backs,[1] and that it did not hurt. As soon as the sheep is swung up, buffaloes, sheep and goats are sacrificed, and the car is then dragged in procession through the village.

A cruel pig sacrifice. Sometimes, when there is cattle disease, a pig is buried up to its neck at the boundary of the village, a heap of boiled rice is deposited near the spot, and then all the cattle of the village are driven over the unhappy pig.[2] It is not the custom at Gudivada to sprinkle anything on the cattle as they pass over the poor animal, as is done elsewhere.

There is a remarkable parallel to this form of sacrifice in a description quoted by Mr. E. Thurston, in his *Ethnographical Notes in Southern India*,[3] of an ancient custom among the Lambadis, a wandering tribe of South India:

> "In former times, the Lambadis, before setting out on a journey, used to procure a little child and bury it in the ground up to its shoulders, and then drive their loaded bullocks over the unfortunate victim. In proportion to the bullocks thoroughly trampling the child to death, so their belief in a successful journey increased."

It is possible that this custom of driving the cattle over the head of a buried pig may be connected with the worship of an agricultural goddess, since in ancient Greece the pig was sacred to agricultural deities, *e.g.* Aphrodite, Adonis, and Demeter; but it may also be a survival of some former custom of infanticide or human sacrifice such as prevailed among the Lambadis.

An old man in the Kurnool district once described to me the account that he had received from his fore-

[1] This is the practice in the Hindu *dola-jātra*, swing-festival, celebrated in honour of Durgā, the wife of Śiva. Cf pp. 61, 76, 82, 83.

[2] See p. 53, 60.

[3] P. 507.

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fathers of the ceremonies observed when founding a new village. An auspicious site is selected and an auspicious day, and then in the centre of the site is dug a large hole, in which are placed different kinds of grain, small pieces of the five metals, gold, silver, copper, iron, and lead, and a large stone, called *boddu-rayee*, *i.e.* navel-stone, standing about three and a half feet above the ground, very like the ordinary boundary stones seen in the fields. And then, at the entrance of the village, in the centre of the main street, where most of the cattle pass in and out on their way to and from the fields, they dig another hole and bury a pig alive. This ceremony would be quite consistent with either of the explanations suggested as to the origin of pig-burying. The pig may be buried at the entrance to the village as the emblem of fertility and strength, to secure the prosperity of the agricultural community, the fertility of the fields, and the health and fecundity of the cattle. Or it may equally be a substitute for an original human sacrifice. The idea that a new building or institution must be inaugurated by the sacrifice of a human life is very common all over India. To this day there is often a panic among the villagers who live near the banks of a river where a bridge is about to be built, because they think that one or more of their babies are sure to be required to bury under the foundations of the first pier. On one of my visits to Kalasapad, in the Cuddapah district, the missionary told me that, when a new ward was opened for their local mission dispensary, no one would go into it, because the people imagined that the first to go in would be the needful sacrifice. Their fears were allayed by a religious service at the opening of the ward; but had it been a Hindu hospital, probably a goat or a sheep would have been killed as a substitute for the human victim.

The idea of substitution, too, is quite common in India. In the hook-swinging ceremony described above,[1]

[1] P. 59.

it is common both in the Telugu and Tamil districts to substitute a sheep for a man, and to fasten the iron hooks in the muscles of its back.

Alleged infanticide among Todas. I have been told that, among the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills, it was formerly the custom to place female children, whom it was not desired to rear, on the ground at the entrance of the mund, *i.e.* a group of huts, and drive buffaloes over them. If they survived this ordeal, they were allowed to live.

It is only fair to add that the Todas themselves deny that this custom ever existed. To quote Mr. Thurston again:[1]

"The practice of infanticide, as it prevailed among the Todas of the Nilgiris, is best summed up in the words of an aged Toda during an interview with Colonel Marshall (*A Phrenologist amongst the Todas*, 1873): 'I was a little boy when Mr. Sullivan (the first English pioneer of the Nilgiris) visited these mountains. In those days it was the custom to kill children, but the practice has long died out, and now one never hears of it. I don't know whether it was wrong or not to kill them, but we were very poor, and could not support our children. Now every one has a mantle (*putkūli*), but formerly there was only one for the whole family. We did not kill them to please any god, but because it was our custom. The mother never nursed the child, and the parents did not kill it. Do you think we could kill it ourselves? Those tell lies who say we laid it before the open buffalo-pen so that it might be run over and killed by the animals. We never did such things, and it is all nonsense that we drowned it in buffalo's milk. Boys were never killed—only girls; not those who were sickly and deformed—that would be a sin; but, when we had one girl, or in some families two girls, those that followed were killed. An old woman (kelachi) used to take the child immediately it was born, and close its nostrils, ears and mouth with a cloth thus (here pantomimic action). It would shortly droop its head, and go to sleep. We then buried it in the ground. The kelachi got a present of four annas (4d.) for the deed.' The old man's remark about the cattle-pen refers to the Malagasy custom of placing a new-born child at the entrance of a cattle-pen, and then driving the cattle over it, to see whether they would trample on it or not."

Masulipatam. At Masulipatam, where ceremonies are performed very similar to those at Gudivada

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 507.

782 of sacrifice. As soon as the victim is killed, the offerer dips his finger in the blood and puts it on his own forehead.

776 796 The annual festival of this goddess[1] lasts for a whole month, ending on the New Year's day of the Telugu calendar. During this festival the procession of pots is observed with special ceremony. Six brass pots, each about two feet high, with the figure of a cobra springing from below the neck and rising over the mouth of the pot, are draped with women's cloths and carried round the town on men's head. Nothing is put inside them, but, as they go round, the women of each house come out, pour water on the feet of the bearers, and make offerings of rice and fruit. These are solemnly presented to the pots by the bearers, and some powder is applied to the two small feet that project at the base of each pot, and form a sort of frame fitting on the bearer's head. The bearer then takes a little of the turmeric powder, that is already on the foot of the pot, and puts it into the dish in which the offering was brought, with a few margosa leaves from a bundle that he carries with him. The dish is returned to the woman who offered the gifts, which become the property of the pūjārī. The women and children of the family mark their foreheads with the turmeric, and put the margosa leaves in their hair. This is called *Amma-vari-Prasādam*.[1] As they go round, the pūjārīs dance to the sound of tom-toms.

776 796 241 On the last day of the festival, when a buffalo is sacrificed, a curious ceremony takes place which is said to be very common in the villages of this district. After the head is cut off by the vetty,[2] who is a Mādigā, the blood is collected in a basin and nine kinds of grain and *gram*[3] are put into it. The basin is then put before the idol inside the shrine, and the

[1] The turmeric and the margosa leaves are a gift of grace (Sanskrit *prasāda*, grace) from the goddess. Food and water from the table of a Hindu god given to the worshippers in the temple are called *prasāda*.

[2] See above p. 56. [3] *Gram* is coarse lentils.

[1] [i.e. Nukalamma, at Cocanada -- Analyst]

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doors of the shrine are kept shut for three days. On the fourth day the doors are opened, the coagulated mass of blood, grain, and gram is carefully washed, and the grain and gram are separated on the ground behind the shrine, in order to see which of the various kinds of grain has sprouted. All the ryots eagerly assemble to watch the result, and whichever is found to have sprouted, is regarded as marked out by the goddess as the right kind of grain to sow that year. This method of determining which crop to sow is common in both the Godavari and Masulipatam districts. In these sacrifices to Nukalamma, too, the application of the blood is specially noticeable. As soon as the victim is killed, a small quantity of the blood is smeared on the sides of the door-posts of the shrine; the deputy-pūjārī dips his finger in the blood and applies it to his forehead; then all the other people present do the same; and afterwards some boiled rice and some turmeric powder are mixed with the blood, and a little of the mixture is sprinkled on the head of the Mādigā who holds the basin to catch the blood.

When an epidemic of cholera breaks out, another goddess, called Maridiamma, is installed in the place of the Nukalamma. A log of margosa wood, about three feet high and six inches in diameter, is cut and roughly carved at the top into the shape of a head, and then fixed in the ground with a pandal of leaves and cloths over it. Then the procession of the earthen pot half filled with buttermilk and rice is conducted, very much in the same way as at Masulipatam,[1] every day till the epidemic subsides. After that, some ten or twelve small carts are made, about six feet square, with three pointed stakes standing up on each side, on which live animals are impaled, as in other parts of the Telugu country.[2] The carts are partly filled with boiled rice and curry stuff prepared at the shrine, the blood of the victims sacrificed being poured over the rice. I was told that live animals were only impaled if a cart did

[1] See p. 62 above. [2] See p. 58 above.

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not move properly as it was dragged to the boundary, since that is regarded as a sign that the goddess is angry and needs to be appeased.

Ellore. The number of victims slaughtered at some of these festivals is enormous. At Ellore, which is a town of considerable size and importance, I was told that at the annual festival of Mahālakshmī about a thousand animals are killed in one day, rich people sending as many as twenty or thirty. The blood then flows down into the fields behind the place of sacrifice in a regular flood, and carts full of sand are brought to cover up what remains on the spot. The heads are piled up in a heap about fifteen feet high in front of the shrine, and a large earthen basin about one-and-a-half feet in diameter is then filled with gingelly oil and put on the top of the heap, a thick cotton wick being placed in the basin and lighted. The animals are all worshipped with the usual *namaskāram*, *i.e.* folded hands raised to the forehead, before they are killed. This slaughter of victims goes on all day.

At midnight about twenty or twenty-five buffaloes are sacrificed. Their heads are cut off by a Mādigā pūjārī and with their carcasses are thrown upon large heaps of rice which have been presented to the goddess, till the rice is soaked with blood.

The subsequent ceremonies illustrate again the varieties of local custom. The rice is collected in about ten or fifteen large baskets, and, instead of being carried by a Mādigā, is carried on a large cart drawn by buffaloes or bullocks, with the Mādigā pūjārī seated on it. As the cart moves along, Mādigās sprinkle the rice on the streets and on the walls of the houses shouting "Poli! Poli!" ("Food! Food!"). A large body of men of different castes, Śūdras, Kommas, and Outcastes, go with the procession: but only the Mādigās and Mālās (the two sections of the Outcastes) shout "Poli," the rest following in silence. They have only two or three torches to show them the way, and no tom-toms nor music. Apparently the idea is that, if they make a noise or display a blaze of light, they will attract the evil spirits,

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who will swoop down on them and do them some injury; though in other villages it is supposed that a great deal of noise and flourishing of sticks will keep the evil spirits at bay. Before this procession starts, the heads of the buffaloes are placed in front of the shrine, with the right foreleg in the mouth, the fat from the entrails smeared about half an inch thick over the whole face, and a large earthen lamp on the top of each head. The Pambalas[1] play tom-toms and chant a long story about Gangamma till daybreak. About eight a.m. they put the buffalo heads with the lighted lamps upon them into separate baskets; and these are carried in procession through the town to the sound of tom-toms. All castes follow, shouting and singing. In former times, I was told, there was a good deal of fighting and disturbance during this procession, but now the police maintain order. When the procession arrives at the municipal limits, the heads are thrown over the boundary, and left there. The people then all bathe in the canal and return home.

On the last day of the festival, which, I may remark, lasts for about three months, a small cart is made of margosa wood and a stake is fixed at each of the four corners. A pig and a fowl are tied to each stake, while a fruit, called *dubakaya*, is impaled on it instead of the animal. A yellow cloth, sprinkled with the blood of the buffaloes, is tied round the sides of the cart, and some margosa leaves are tied round the cloth. A Pambala sits on the cart, to which are fastened two large ropes, each about 200 yards long. Then men of all castes, without distinction, lay hold of the ropes and drag the cart round the town to the sound of tom-toms and music. Finally it is brought outside the municipal limits and left there, the Outcastes taking away the animals and fruits.

Sometimes, I was told, animals are sacrificed to Gangamma by the people in Ellore in the courtyards of their own houses. They then clean the wall of

See p. 58 above.

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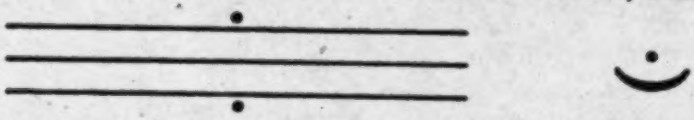
the house outside with cow-dung and make three horizontal lines with kunkuma (a red paste of turmeric and lime), with a dot above and below, and a semi-circle on the right side with a dot in the middle, thus:—



The symbol on the right represents the sun and moon: that on the left is the Śaivite sectarian mark. They sacrifice to these symbols sheep, goats, and fowls. It is curious that, in these private sacrifices at home, they pour water on the sheep and goats to see whether they shiver, as a sign of acceptance,[1] though this is not done in the public sacrifices at Ellore.

Dharmaja-Gudem, near Ellore. At a village called Dharmaja-Gudem, about sixteen miles from Ellore, while the main features of the festivals are the same as those found elsewhere, there are two or three peculiarities, which deserve notice. The ordinary grāma-devatās of the village are Ellaramma, Gaṅgamma, Mutyalamma, and Ravelamma, who are represented by four stone pillars about six feet high, with figures of women carved on them, standing in an open field on the outskirts of the village: but when an epidemic breaks out, Mutyalamma, Gaṅgamma, Aṅkamma and Mahālakshmīamma are the deities propitiated, and special images are made of them. Those of the first three are made of clay, but that of Mahālakshmīamma is made of turmeric kneaded into a paste. Then, again, it is noticeable that a Brāhman acts as pūjārī of Mahālakshmī, a washerman as pūjārī of Gaṅgamma, and a potter as pūjārī of Aṅkamma. The Brāhman pūjārī presides over the worship for the greater part of the festival, which lasts for about three months, and during that time the people come almost every day and offer flowers, fruits, cocoanuts, camphor and incense, but no animal sacrifices. All this time, too, some nautch-

[1] See p. 55 above.

All this time[1] too, some nautch—
girls come and dance in a booth erected in front of the 796
image and work themselves up into a state of frenzy, 776
during which they are supposed to be inspired by the 782
deities, and utter oracles to the worshippers. When 786
the epidemic begins to abate, the Brāhman pūjārī
closes his part of the proceedings and departs.

Then, on that afternoon and evening, animal sacri- [787]
fices are offered under the booth. On the first animal
killed, which is generally a goat, water is poured from
a brass vessel, to see if it shivers.[1] If it does, it is
taken as a good omen that the goddess is propitiated
and the disease will disappear. Then other animals are
brought and, in accordance with a very common division
of functions in the Telugu country, a washerman kills
the sheep, goats, and fowls, and a Mādigā the buffaloes.
The heads of the sheep and goats, as well as of the
buffaloes, have the right forelegs put crosswise in the
mouths, the faces smeared with fat from the entrails,
and a lighted lamp placed above them. The blood is
caught in a basket full of boiled rice, and the rice and
blood are sprinkled round the village, while a Mādigā
carries on his own head the head of a buffalo exactly as
is done elsewhere. Here, too, great care is taken to
prevent any person from another village taking away
any of the rice and blood, lest the other village should
get all the benefit of the sacrifice, and evils of all kinds
descend on the unhappy villagers who have offered it.
The ceremony of impaling live animals on stakes fixed
round a wooden car,[2] and dragging them off to the
boundary of the village is also practised here.

Bhīmadole, near Ellore. At another village, called 241
Bhīmadole, about twenty miles from Ellore, I came 776
across one of the few instances I have met with of any 782
direct connexion between the harvest and the worship 796
of a village goddess. There is an annual festival held
there about harvest time, in November or December,
lasting one day, which is always a Tuesday. About half
a ton of rice is boiled in the middle of the village, taken

[1] See page 55. [2] See p. 58.

[see cat 116, p 68 -- ANALYST]

25: Whitehead M-3 (no date) 1921 AW1 India
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776 to the shrine and presented in a heap before the image,
796 with a lighted lamp on the top of it, made of rice flour
241 kneaded into a paste, and holding about one pint of oil.[1]
782 Some toddy is poured on the ground to the east of the rice by the washerman; incense and camphor are burnt; while the people make namaskāram (salutation with folded hands raised to the forehead) to the image. As many as two hundred sheep and goats are then killed, and fowls are brought by the poorer people. In this festival, the rice soaked in the blood of the victims is not sprinkled on the streets of the village nor over the houses, but each ryot gives a handful of it to one of his field servants (an Outcaste), who takes and sprinkles it over his master's fields. Three handfuls of the crop are cut on the same day to inaugurate the harvest. No buffaloes are sacrificed during this festival.

755 On the other hand, when an epidemic breaks
776 out, there is a special festival, in which five or six buffaloes
782 are sacrificed as well as about three hundred sheep and goats. The buffaloes are killed last of all. One special buffalo, called *Pedda-Veta*, great sacrifice, is reserved to the end, and killed at about ten p.m. Nothing special is done with the blood of the other buffaloes nor with that of the sheep and goats, but the blood of the Pedda-Veta is allowed to flow on to some of the rice, as soon as the head is severed, and both head and carcass are placed upon the rice heap. The head, as usual, has the right foreleg put in the mouth, with fat smeared over the face and a lighted lamp above it.

At about eleven p.m. the head is carried by aMālā, not by a Mādigā in this village, on his own head three times round the boundaries of the village site, and the rice soaked in blood is sprinkled by the Mālās on the ground, as they go, and on any cattle they happen to meet, accompanied by the same weird and excited procession as elsewhere.

778 The illustration facing this page represents a shrine of Poshamma, a goddess worshipped by the Mālās. On the top of the shrine stands an earthenware lamp.

[1] See p. 39.

[P 71]

CHAPTER V

MODES OF WORSHIP IN THE CANARESE COUNTRY

171 THE Canarese are closely allied ethnologically to the Telugus,[1] and we should naturally expect, therefore, to find a close connexion between the ceremonies used by the two peoples in the worship of their village goddesses. A brief account of the ceremonies used in different parts of the Canarese country will show how far this is actually the case.

776 796 *Bellary District.* In the Bellary district Durgamma,[1] Sunkalamma, and Uramma are very commonly worshipped. Uramma means simply the village goddess, and is equivalent to the general term grāma-devatā. Her festival is not celebrated annually, but when there is a specially good crop, or when cholera or plague break out. The following account of it was given me by an Asādi of a village near Bellary, and may be taken as describing fairly the general type of such festivals and sacrifices throughout the district.

776 755 772 We will suppose that cholera has broken out in the village. The villagers then make vows to offer the sacrifice if the epidemic ceases. The day appointed for the festival is invariably a Tuesday, and on the previous Tuesday a basin-shaped earthen lamp, filled with oil and furnished with a stout cotton wick, is placed in the house of the *Reddy* (village magistrate) and kept lighted till the festival and all the ceremonies are ended. The carpenter, also, prepares beforehand a wooden image of the goddess and a small cart, while

[1] Durgā is one of the many names of Kālī, the wife of Śiva.

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361 489 station is Kalikiri, at a distance of 10 miles. The nearest commercial centres are Kandur and Kalikiri, where grain, tamarind and jaggery are sold in large quantities.

465 [804] *Economic condition.*—The customary rates of wages are—in money—men 3 annas per day; women 2 annas per day; in kind—three measures of paddy or ragi per day and a small quantity of food in the afternoon. The measure is half a Madras measure.*

Or a man may be given two annas and a meal.

435 Current prices—

Rice	...	...	...	8 local measures for a rupee
Ragi	...	...	...	10 " "
Sazzulu	...	...	...	10 " "
Cholam	...	...	...	9 " "
Tamarind		...	...	As. 2–6 per viss.*
Jaggery	...	...	...	As. 6 "
Chillies	...	...	...	As. 8 "

426 The village debt is estimated at Rs. 2,000.

There have been no good rains for the past three or four years and consequently there have been successive failures of crops. The ryot has therefore been obliged to borrow money for buying bulls, and grain, and to enable him to pay his rent. For these reasons there is much indebtedness in the village.†

There are only two families who have liberated themselves to a small extent from debt once incurred.

[452] There is no Co-operative Credit Society.

435 Wet lands sell at Rs. 400 to Rs. 1,000 per acre, dry lands at Rs. 40 to Rs. 60. It is only recently that the prices have gone up. Formerly they were selling at a lower rate, the maximum rate being about Rs. 500 per acre. The rise in price is due to the fact that there are more ryots than land and demand is unsatisfied.

•796 *Expenditure on religious festivals.*—At one annual festival, called Paleti Gangamma Jathara, about Rs. 60 or Rs. 70 are spent. Nothing has been spent on new temples in recent years and no advantage is taken of the Agricultural Loans Act.

164 [759] [743] *Sanitary condition.*—Neither malaria, cholera, plague nor small-pox are prevalent. For ordinary ailments people get themselves treated by two native doctors in Kandur, two others in Somala at a distance of 4 miles and one other there in the village itself. For more serious diseases people have recourse to the hospitals at Sodam at a distance of 12 miles, or at Vayalpad or Piler, at distances of about 20 miles.

562 Though there are two Muhammadan families they do not observe purdah.

364 Night-soil is not allowed to accumulate in the village, but the sullage water is allowed to sink into the ground in every house. In some houses there are cesspools where this collects, and pollutes the air around.

312 For drinking purposes water is got out of a well about half a furlong from the end of the village nearest to it. For other domestic purposes, only two houses, one Brahman and one Kapu, have wells in their backyards. All the others get water from the well above mentioned for all purposes. The water in the two wells mentioned is brackish.

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* It follows that one local measure of paddy weighs about 1¾ lb.; of rice, ragi, sazzalu or cholam about 1¾ lb. A viss in Madras is a little over 3 lb.—Ed.

† In 1917 there were good rains—vide under Gownipalle, Festivals.

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Money is lent at about 9½ per cent interest per annum. The registered capital is a little over a thousand rupees. There are forty-six members. There is a Secretary, a President, and a Treasurer, all honorary posts.

Dry land sells at from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 per acre; wet land from Rs. 400 to Rs. 800. There has been a rise in prices owing to the increased demands for land and insufficient supply.

Under the Mysore Agricultural Loans Act loans nearly to the extent of Rs. 1,200 have been taken up at 4 per cent interest per annum from the Mysore Government.

Festivals.—A great festival is held at irregular intervals in honour of the goddess Gangamma, the tutelary goddess of the village and its fields and crops. There was a celebration in 1911, and another, prompted by a succession of bad seasons, in 1917. This last was celebrated from the 22nd to the 29th of April. The inhabitants of sixteen villages took part, every family making some contribution, and some 10,000 people congregated in Gownipalli. An image of the goddess is made of rice-flour, copying the silver image in Punganur. It shows only the neck and head, wearing a lofty head-dress. Before this image some 2,000 victims are sacrificed. The first sacrifice is that of a male buffalo; this takes place at midnight, and is followed by that of two or three goats. In the following morning 21 buffaloes are sacrificed. Throughout the festival there is great rejoicing and weird dancing at night, with *kolattam*, short sticks held in the hands and beaten together. Finally the goddess is carried in procession, with drums and cymbals, to the water and thrown in, and there she dissolves. This year there have been good crops and all the tanks are full. The animals sacrificed, in addition to male buffaloes and goats, are rams and cocks. The Brahmans take no part in this festival. The village officers make money out of it, the patel may get Rs. 30 or Rs. 40.

Sanitary condition.—Malaria is always prevalent. The water for drinking purposes is bad and the village is situated in a low marshy place. Two years ago the village suffered from cholera. There were about fifty deaths. It is free from plague. This year (1916) there was an attack of small-pox, with some deaths. In disease people get themselves treated by native doctors. The nearest hospital is at Srinivaspur, but no advantage is taken of it, as they regard it as most unsatisfactory.

All kinds of filth and dirt are allowed to accumulate in the courtyards of the houses. Cattle are housed there only and people sleep near these places. This is to a great extent minimized among the Brahmans.

No infant marriages are allowed in Mysore. The bride must be at least eight years old and the bridegroom sixteen years.

All Muhammadans observe purdah.

Water for drinking purposes is found in abundance. All the Brahmans drink water got out of wells in their backyards. Others drink out of a well about half a furlong from the village and out of the stream aforesaid. Almost all the water is fresh. But it has a tendency to bring on malaria.

Education.—There is one school, but the accommodation is insufficient. The classes, about seven in number, are held in two

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
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very close to the human inmates. Rubbish and cow-dung are stored up in front of the houses, while in rainy seasons the whole becomes a stagnant pool of water, rubbish and cow-dung. 511 356

The houses of the Pariahs are filled with an awful smell of skins, bones and putrid flesh. The insufficiency of food that they suffer from tempts them to fill their bellies with toddy and other stimulants that ultimately ruin their health.

The Sudras are perfectly temperate and simple in habits and food. The "twice-born" castes are bound to marry their girls before twelve. The lower castes are not bound to do so. But the Sudras and lower castes actually marry their girls at a very early age, both to satisfy the anxiety of elders and for fear they may not have the money afterwards. I know a case in which a girl two months old was married to a boy of two years, the boy dying a year later of cholera. They maintain strict widowhood like the Brahmans. There is no purdah. 582

The villagers bathe and wash clothes and also wash their cattle in the same tank as that used for drinking. 515

Education.—There is one school; its accommodation and equipment being a rented house, an atlas, a globe, text books, some pictures of common objects, civics primers, dumb-bells, a black board, a desk, benches for boys to sit upon. 871

Elementary education is given up to the fourth standard, in the vernacular, in history, arithmetic, geography, civics, etc. This education is most unpractical and incomplete and ill-suited to the villagers, who do not proceed to college classes. It does not enable them to read good books in Telugu or to learn even the elementary principles of sanitation. They are never made to feel that they are citizens of a world, or an empire, or a province, outside the narrow bounds of their village.

Attendance—	Boys.	Girls.
1913	19	4
1914	9	3
1915	45	12
1916	54	8
1917	48	6

About 30 per cent of the adults can read the vernacular; two persons can read and talk English. There is a noted musician in the village but no other pandit. Not less than 25 or 30 per cent of those who have passed through the school have lost their capacity to write or cipher after leaving. One boy has proceeded to the Mechanical Engineering course in the Victoria Technical Institute, Bombay; another to the Arts course in the Madras University. [191]

There are 90 to 100 books, of which 70 are owned by Brahmans, made up of novels, dramas, puranas, the Mahabharata and stories. Among the Sudras, a development of literary taste, though in a very small degree, is perceptible. There are many devotional songs and lives of Telugu saints, while stories of the epics rendered into songs and recited by "Bhagavathars" are very frequent. The latest innovation is the introduction of dramas. Novels are still a rarity, as well as histories. No newspaper comes to the village. 538

The village has no temple except that of the village goddess. Her festival is celebrated with much slaughter of cattle and goats given by their owners whenever there is an outbreak of cholera or small-pox; or, failing these, once in four or five years. The cost is 796

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796 from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150, largely spent on drink. The priests of the goddess are low caste people, chiefly the washerman caste. They get new cloths as presents. The whole celebration is barbarous and repulsive.

624 *The village administration.*—There is no panchayat in the village. The village officers consist of a karnam, a munsif, and three servants. The karnam keeps the village accounts, while the munsif collects the revenue and attends to small criminal cases. The munsif does not generally care to try civil cases even within his province; they all go to the District Munsif's court.

364 Nobody attends to the village sanitation, though the munsif is expected to do so. The villagers too do not care to help him in his work. The Sanitary Inspector comes once in a year, and quietly goes away with satisfactory remarks from the easy chair in his note book. He being the one officer for two or three taluks, cannot pay much attention to one taluk in particular; besides he also has engineering work.

625 The police station is seven miles away. When crimes of extraordinary nature take place, the munsif reports the same to the police, who come and conduct enquiries. Most of the crimes are hushed up. Police enquiry is a sham. So is the night patrolling, which is the duty of the village servants.

692 The munsif is expected to hear petty crimes; but many cases
696 that might have been decided here go to the Magistrate's court. Many crimes have been left undetected, and the criminals unpunished, crimes which were horrible and plainly proved. As locally interpreted, the effect of the Evidence Act is such as to render the most proved case null and void for "want of proper evidence." When a murderer once escapes easily from punishment, another is at once encouraged. All the villagers know that it is these considerations that encouraged a man engaged in litigation to murder another who was about to give evidence against him. That case went unpunished. Such is the case with most murders. In fact, most men engaged in important litigation are afraid for their
674 lives in this village. In three years there have been four murders in the neighbourhood of the village, two killed in connection with litigation and two in connection with robbery from the person.

691 There is much litigation. About 45 cases are filed every year. Of these twenty to twenty-five will be for non-clearance of debts, and fifteen to twenty for land disputes. The villagers do not seem to show any hesitation or fear in resorting to the courts. The half educated Brahman in the village, acting as an agent for a vakil, with no other profession, tries to earn his livelihood by creating enmity and disputes among ignorant families and dragging them to the courts. Thus several families which were once considered very rich have been ruined. One family of Komatis, for example, with a property of about Rs. 20,000, was sued by some relations for a partition of the estate. The Vaisya refused all compromise in the earlier courts, pursued the case at enormous expense through the three courts, till he finally lost the whole estate in the High Court. In the end, the family of twelve children, with not an inch of land for support, and no means of liquidating the debts contracted for the court expenses, have sold their big house and gone away to the Agency tracts as beggars to fill their bellies. There are many families in the village similarly ruined.